


Inspired to LEAD

Profiles of Youth leaders
changing their communities



KCDF 
people, giving and working together



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

KCDF wishes to thank Japan Social Development Fund who provided resources through the World Bank to facilitate the implementation of the Youth Development Programme

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1 leader.
7 values.
infinite possibilities.



DEDICATION

Dedicated to all the young people, devoting their verve and optimism to make the world a better place. Your numberless, diverse acts of leadership, devotion and service are shaping history.



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	– Community Based Organisation
FGM	– Female Genital Mutilation
IDPs	– Internally Displaced Persons
JSDF	– Japan Social Development Fund
KCDF	– Kenya Community Development Foundation
KCPE	– Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	– Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KENVO	– Kijabe Environmental Volunteers
KMTC	– Kenya Medical Training College
NGO	– Non Governmental Organisation
OVC	– Orphans and Vulnerable Children
TOT	– Trainer of Trainers
TSC	– Teachers Service Commission
UCAHA	– Ugenya Community Against HIV/AIDS
UN	– United Nations



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FOREWORD

In 2006, KCDF started the Youth Development Programme whose goal was to *strengthen the inclusion, participation and empowerment of young Kenyans in community and national development processes.*

Funded by the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) through the World Bank, Kenya office, this programme was designed to address in a holistic way, the well-being of youth in areas such as life skills, economic self reliance, recreation, HIV/AIDS, leadership development, social accountability, among others.

The programme was, in particular, intended to support initiatives that promote youth leadership and volunteerism, income generating activities among the youth, HIV/AIDS interventions, youth resource centres and programmes that encourage recreation to promote the welfare of youth.

In January 2008, almost midway in the implementation of the programme, Kenya erupted into post election turmoil that brought to the fore, the wide ethnic fissures and deep-rooted anger prevalent among some communities. Bearing the biggest brunt of this mayhem - as either perpetrators or victims - were the youth.

This infamous chapter, however, proved to be a turning point for the programme that we were implementing. It became clear to us that we had to re-orient our focus, to support youth initiatives that promote peace, harmony and cohesion. For us to succeed in this undertaking, we realised that we had to impart the youth with leadership skills that would empower them to drive the reconciliation agenda themselves.

In May 2008, KCDF assembled the first group of 50 youth in Nairobi for a training forum. This group comprised of young people in position of leadership within their youth groups or nominated by Community Based Organisations (CBOs) supported by KCDF. Facilitated by KCDF and Quest Leadership Centre – a leadership training consultancy – the forum gave the youth the opportunity to open up and share freely. This forum was bolstered by two American experts in conflict resolution, Dr. Jim Seymour and Lin Dawson, who were brought in by Quest Leadership Centre. Subsequent training forums were organised in Limuru and Meru later in 2009, within the same context.

In total, 170 young people participated in what was to be known as the first phase of the programme, now referred to as the “Core Group.” This group comprised of youth who are knowledgeable on a wide range of issues such as, budding artists, aspiring farmers, potential community change agents, entrepreneurs. All these young people were, for one reason or another, limited by mindset, opinions about them and low self esteem.

The training curriculum was comprehensive. Not necessarily unique in terms of content but the mode of delivery and interaction with the participants. The forums provided the youth with the op-



portunity to open up, release their fears and appreciate the diversity of the country.

Energised by the training, the youth embarked on a recruitment drive targeting their peers. Each member, they agreed, would pass on the knowledge to at least 10 young people in their community, imparting them with a set of values that promote harmony such as honesty, trust and accountability.

KCDF started receiving encouraging reports on the success that the youth were achieving in their communities. It became obvious to us that they were forming a critical mass that was pioneering reconciliation and community development all over the country.

Working with the Marketing and Communication team within KCDF,

the youth agreed to come up with an inspiring identity that captures the spirit of dynamism and vibrancy in the communities. After rigorous brainstorming sessions, **Shabaa, 170∞** was born. Shabaa stands for **One Leader, 7 Goals, infinite possibilities**; that is, one leader, instilling 7 values of leadership to at least 10 people who then commit to reach out to an infinite number of people, therefore creating countless possibilities.

Two years later, these young people have not only become leaders in their communities but are also driving other key parameters of the programme: life skills, recreation, HIV/AIDS interventions, among others.

This publication illuminates the lives of some of these young people – who are now known as ‘Wanashabaa.’ Their success stories validate the value of investment that KCDF made in them. The 19 young leaders featured in this publication provide a glimpse of how the environment where young people grow up in and the opportunities that they encounter, in a way, influences their aspirations and direction in life.

We salute these young leaders for inspiring their communities and so can we, all.

Janet Mawiyoo
Chief Executive Officer
KCDF



KCDF started receiving encouraging reports on the success that the youth realising in their communities. It became obvious to us that they were forming a critical mass that was defining reconciliation and community development all over the country.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) and the World Bank, Kenya Office, for providing resources that have allowed us to undertake this incredible journey. We also thank them for allowing us the flexibility to commit some funds to promote peace initiatives in the country, during the most critical chapter in our political history.

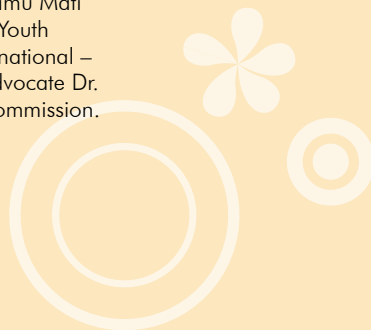
We thank all KCDF staff members who supported the programme, starting with the Programme Co-ordinator, Sonia Rasugu and her assistant, Peter Wechuli. We thank KCDF Board and staff members for their continued guidance during the implementation of the programme.

We wish to thank Dr Jim Seymour and Mr Lin Dawson for training the youth and also for helping them discover themselves and define their goals. The trainers, mentors from Quest Leadership Centre – Ms Beverly Nuthu, Mr Githaiga Kamau, Mr Martin Karanja and Mr Bernard Mayonge, your faith in young people and passion for transformative leadership is inspiring.

Kenyans of note who talked to and motivated the trainees: Mr. Philip Nganga (then at UNDP-Youth Programme), Mr Felicien Nemeiyimana (Peace, Healing and Reconciliation Project, PHARP), Mr Boniface Mwangi and Mr George Gachara (Picha Mtaani), Mr Mwalimu Mati (Mars Group), Mr Party Milimu (then Provincial Director for Youth Affairs – Rift Valley Province), Mrs Mercy Chidi (Ripples International – Meru), Mr Louis Otieno (Louis Otieno Live, K24 TV), and advocate Dr. PLO Lumumba, now the Director, Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission.

We say thank you to all of you.

Sonia Rasugu
Programme Co-ordinator
Youth Development Programme



Introduction

In Kenya, like any other country in the world, young people are looking for leaders and role models with values that they can emulate. Unfortunately, leadership roles have often been assumed by persons of material advantage in society, negating what truly constitute leadership: values, character and vision.

In many African countries, leadership is viewed as self-serving, dictatorial, and corrupt, even to the point that it controls and limits the contribution, growth, and potential of the people. The youth in Kenya have not been adequately entrusted with an opportunity to learn, grow and hone their leadership skills. This was evident in the aftermath of the post-election violence of 2008.

The inter-community anger bred since independence ruptured during the post-election violence. The turmoil confirmed that selfishness and tribalism had eventually been fully entrenched as criteria for election of leaders.

The youth were greatly affected not only in the effects of the skirmishes but also as perpetrators of the killings, looting and destruction of property. The political class poisoned them with messages of hate – “we” versus “them.” They also gave them promises that provoked a false sense of lib-

eration from their poor current economic status.

KCDF singled out leadership challenges and unemployment among the youth as predisposing factors for the violence. The leadership training and the subsequent youth initiatives that KCDF supported were geared towards addressing these two challenges.

At the end of each training session, the participants agreed on key actions they would take as individuals and leaders within their communities to promote reconciliation and nation-building as follows:

- (i) To take action and target other youth within their communities, share knowledge and influence them to participate in peace building.
- (ii) To establish partnership with local stakeholders such as government agencies, nonprofit organisations and faith based organisations to promote youth leadership, participation and cohesion among communities.
- (iii) To mobilise resources in partnership with KCDF to recruit more young people in the programme



She is caught up in a village where girl education is inferior to becoming a bar maid or house servant, which earns quick money, but Joyce Loko stands out, shatters this myth and comes out a role model to other girls.

Joyce LOKO



In Mumbuni Location, Machakos District, girls have no desire to go school. Role models here are the girls who work in Nairobi city as house helps or barmaids.

When these 'role models' come home with assortments of goodies, the village girls are convinced that this is the ideal lifestyle. They therefore run to the city immediately after Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE).

"These girls need someone to show them that being a bar maid or maidservant is far from attaining self-actualization," says Rosemary Mwambura, the Machakos District Youth Officer (DYO).

Joyce Loko Nzau is not in this category. She looks at life differently, and that is why she has friends such as Rosemary.

Since her childhood, Loko has engaged in programmes that have positively moulded her into

a role model to the girls in Mumbuni village.

"This young lady goes from school to school, from market to market talking about attitude change, training girls and boys on the dangers of irresponsible sexual practices. She gives her village the hope that the situation here can be salvaged," says Rosemary.

Loko is barely 19 years old. She is the last born to Charles and Agnes Nzau. Loko remembers her childhood with relish: "My mum was a Sunday school teacher while dad was a choir master. Most of the time I would be engaged in church activities."

"Church has always been a bee hive of activity. One of the liveliest ministries was Youth in Action Group. This was and is still a group of youth that organizes community sensitization sessions on issues affecting the youth,"

explains Loko.

Youth in Action also organizes camps in different parts of the country at different times of the year. This, Loko says, has exposed her to life's issues and an opportunity to interact with girls from different parts of the country.

"The girls from other parts of the country hold education in high esteem and are very committed," Loko says. The fire in other girls has continued to encourage her. She says: "I was not going to bow down to peer-pressure or negative village mentality."

At Ivumbuni Primary School, she joined the girl-guide group, a scouting club that organized camps during holidays. "Girl-guide instilled in me the Baden Powell ideals of being alert and ready at all times," Loko says. It was after joining the Girl-Guide that her dream of becoming a nurse died.

"I wanted to work without restrictions. When I was in class five to



class eight, I remember seeing many of my friends dropping out of school to go and take up jobs as house helps in Machakos and Nairobi towns, “she painfully recalls. Peer pressure, she says, drove the girls out of school. But she made a resolve to continue with her education.

She joined Mwala Girls Secondary School and completed in 2007. She then joined Kenya Voluntary Association as a volunteer for a month before enrolling for Diploma in Community Development at Pivot Institute, in Machakos Town.

After completing the two year course, Loko joined Young Professional for Development (YPD), a non governmental organization in Machakos Town.

“I currently work at Young Professional for Development. My work involves community mobilizing, conducting baseline survey and leadership training,” she explains. While working here,

Loko says that she was given a leadership training form to fill.

The leadership training, organized by KCDF would be Loko’s turning point in life.

“The training that I attended in Limuru was an added advantage to the work I had started. I think it was my first effective training,” she says. “I was a very poor communicator. I lacked confidence, but after this training, I can now stand before any crowd and speak with confidence,” she adds.

Her father, Charles, agrees that Loko has undergone a huge transformation from the training. He says of his daughter: “She used to be a very nervous girl, but she has become more alert and composed.”

The training diffused the notion that dictatorship instills respect in people. “KCDF taught me that people lose interest under a dictator but being soft, warm, and one who listens to others’ opinions, make a better leader,” she says.

“I want to talk to as many girls as possible to realise that they shouldn’t rush into early marriages,” says Loko.

Jenifer Shishoka, the youth officer at the District Youth Office agrees that Loko is an inspiration to many other employees. She says of her: “This young girl amazes me. She does not fear anyone, but puts across what she believes in with confidence.”

She concurs with Jenifer: “I used to fear talking before boys, but now, I go for it.” She plans to continue organizing workshops targeting young people and therefore utilise the skills she garnered from KCDF’s training.

Her objective as a person is to further her studies to the highest level. So far she has trained and organized workshops in schools and market places.

The challenges that she faces are lack of equipment such as a computer and projectors to aid her in terms of audio-visual technicalities. Finances become a challenge when they need to do photocopies or any relevant paper work needed for easy trainings.

Getting permission in institutions and enough time to effectively carry out trainings also remains a challenge also.

Loko has one mantra: “the sky is the limit.”

“I want to talk to as many girls as possible to realise that they shouldn’t dive into early marriages”





Martin Oloo

He was born a reveller, a bully, a rebel, and a ring leader. Oloo is now a transformed man; a business man and a role model

Martin Saurer Oloo today runs a booming cyber café, a production studio, and it's from these business ventures that he supports the projects and initiatives of Legacy Youth Group.

After attending KCDF leadership training, Oloo is today an asset to the society especially the youth – a group lacking in a sense of direction and leadership. He is a peace-maker, admired by many young people in Kisumu. When Kenya descended into chaos shortly after the presidential election results, Oloo reportedly marshalled the local youths of Bandani estate into riots and destruction of property.

“We thought we were defending our country,” remembers Oloo. “But when I attended KCDF’s training, I was told of better ways of solving conflicts,” he adds.

This training was part of KCDF’s strategic plan for 2009-2013 that hinged on streamlining the organization’s operations to be more relevant and responsive to prevailing circumstances.

Oloo was in the first Core Group, comprising of 50 young people, who participated in KCDF’s Leadership programme on leadership and conflict resolution in Nairobi. Today, he has developed a character that strikes a complete opposite of what he used to be in his early life – even a few years ago.

I was born a reveller, a bully, a rebel, and a ring leader. “I have led a life of lawlessness and waywardness,” Oloo remembers. Born in 1977, in the remote village of Rapogi, South Nyanza, Oloo was raised in a family of farmers.

“My father was very cruel and so I never got direction from him. He never listened to me,” he says. He would later rebel against the father when he was in high school.

“At Homabay High School, I became a bully and led three successful strikes that destroyed the school,” he remembers. It was a case of a young man looking for attention and direction.

A fan of hard core musicians such as Shabba Ranks, Chaka Demus, and others, Oloo took to bhang smoking and heavy drinking.

Ever

Kenya Certificate of Secondary School (KCSE). He later joined Mombasa Polytechnic. "Life became worse at Mombasa Polytechnic. I would go into drinking sprees with friends and women", he says.

When word reached his father back at home, he declined to pay any more school fees. "It was a difficult time for me. I refused to go back home, deciding to remain jobless in Mombasa," he remembers.

In Mombasa, Oloo engaged in acting and directing stage plays. "I suffered so much in Mombasa. It made me undergo an awakening," he says. His situation deteriorated and he soon became an alcoholic.

His life would have a turn-around when a scholarship foundation, Grahams Cultural Foundation, offered to rehabilitate him. Even though the rehab did not help change his character, the foundation offered to sponsor his education.

"Instead of going back to Mombasa Polytechnic, I enrolled at the Dar es Saalam University to undertake a Bachelors of Arts, Linguistics, and Literature" degree. He later pursued a Masters degree in Folklore Art.

Later, he was enrolled by Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and taught Arts, Fasihi and Literature in various secondary schools. "After teaching in high schools, I realised that this was not what I loved doing. I wanted to be someone who was able to write scripts, direct and stage it anywhere," he says.

After some years, Oloo quit his teaching job and then formed a theatre group known as Legacy Youth Group. "Our group's core activity is staging plays that sensitise people on social ills such

as HIV and Aids; Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs); and others," he explains.

"With KCDF's training, I was able to give direction to my group. The training literally transformed me into a peace ambassador," he adds.

"I was this kind of person who solved deadlocks by way of fists and trading words. The training sessions taught me how to use the power of reasoning," he says.

It is after the training that Oloo saw the bigger picture of the Kenyan communities and the need for peaceful coexistence amongst tribes.

Oloo agrees that bad influence can be turned into a powerful tool to foster positive influence.

After the training, he went back to Nyanza with a changed attitude and joined Nyanza Peace Initiative.

Apart from Nyanza Peace Initiative, he has organized a campaign in conjunction with a Catholic Church. "We knocked on about two hundred households, reaching about 1500 people," he remembers.

He has since produced a film called 'Children of a lesser god'.

The short film revolves around the youth and how they're influenced by negative politics.

"Now that we have finalised with the editing, our next move is to screen the film to various audiences," he says.

On challenges he has faced during trainings and sensitizations, Oloo says that suspicion is his major obstacle. "We sometimes come close to death as people mistake us for spies," he says.

"Nothing will stop me. The future is bright and we plan to hold onto that hope," he says

**Bad influence
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positive
influence**





Milania Wanjiku



On her way back from school, Milania would see a group of boys crouching in the thickets and bushes. They were either consuming illicit drinks or smoking bhang. She would later realise that this was the beginning of the illegal group Mungiki.

Today Murang'a is one of the places infiltrated by the deadly group that has gripped the entire Central Kenya and Nairobi City. It is this menacing group and its potential members that Milania reaches out to in her everyday life.

"I owe these youth the skills that I acquired from KCDF," she says. "The politicians have failed to show them direction. They have no role models and so it's the gang leaders around here who have become the substitute role models," she notes.

At a tender age of 25, Milania has strived to change negative attitude among the youth and has always been on the forefront of several campaigns geared towards changing the perception of the community, little wonder that Equity Bank saw her potential and offered her a job at Kenol Town branch.

"They (Equity Bank officials) were present at a function where I was talking to youth on the dangers of crime and irresponsible livelihood. And after sometime, they called and offered me a job," she remembers.

For most of 2009, she was coordinating the distribution of Roto storage tanks to youth groups that have an account with the bank. She also helps several youth groups in accessing loans from Equity Bank.

"The youth who took my advice positively have never looked back. Motoga Youth Group, for example, has invested in farming and currently has an acre of land where they grow tomatoes," she recounts.

Wagakaru Women group, a self help group that had savings but had lacked ideas on how to move forward got support from the Ministry of Agriculture that in turn gave them seedlings.

"This young girl has shown us the way," says Margaret Waruguru, the secretary of the group. She has also facilitated several meetings with the German Organization, GTZ, which has then built power-saving Jikos for every member of the group.

"I owe all I have been able to do to KCDF's training. It opened my eyes," she says. "What I do now was my dream. But before the training, I didn't know how to go about it. I couldn't express myself and I totally lacked self-confidence," she remembers

According to Milania, Mungiki's menace has been exacerbated due to the conflict



Milania is only 26. She has changed negative attitude among the youth. She is now more confident and on the forefront of several campaigns geared towards changing the perception of the community.

between the youth and the authorities. A lot of them, she says, are jobless and lack a sense of direction. "Now that I am skilled in conflict resolution, I am able to arbitrate between these two groups and offer solutions," she adds.

Public speaking, which was part of the training, has enabled her to gain respect from the young and old alike. "I can talk to any crowd of people, something that I would not do before the training," she confidently says.

Milania has today dedicated her life to fostering peace and offering alternative ways of livelihood.

She has also trained 30 members of Mutoga Youth group on communication and entrepreneurship. "I have trained 35 members of Study Circle Youth Group in Nakuru and organised a workshop of over a hundred people in Thika Town," she says.

Milania was born in 1984 in Murang'a South District, currently Kandara District. She went to Mamjuu Primary School then to Kateti Secondary school.

"Life after school was challenging. I didn't know myself. I had no goals or a clear life purpose. "I started getting involved in any youth activity that came my way. Before long I was elected to be the youth leader of Ganjiro Location," she remembers.

Her work was to relay any information from the office of the Youth and Development to various youth groups. In 2006, she joined Mbewe Computer School and did certificate in Computer Packages.

Two years later, Milania joined Kamuga Youth Group who approached SACDEP, a Non Governmental Organization (NGO), to assist their group of youth on sustainable agri-business. SACDEP developed the group's capacity to identify agribusiness opportunities and set up small scale enterprises in fruit processing, mushroom production, and chicken rearing. It is SACDEP that recommended Milania to participate in the Leadership Training programme offered by KCDF in May 2008.

After working at Equity Bank, Milania became a peer educator with the Kenya Red Cross. She also leads a youth group called Riato Youth Group. "We are currently 20 dedicated members. We deal mostly in agricultural products," she explains. The group rears 30 rabbits, and grows tomatoes on a half acre piece of land.

Her future plan is to form a Community Based Organization (CBO) that will provide grants to youth groups in her area. The second last born in a family of seven children, Milania wishes to see a Kenya where the youth are all mentored and taught to realize the potential of influence in them.



Having tried his hand in politics and failed two consecutive times, Ronald Gisore has taken to farming and giving support to the youth.



Ronald Gisore

Sironga, Nyamira district sits on the undulating hills of the former Kisii District in Nyanza province. Travelling along the beautiful landscape gives a picturesque – of green tea plantations, blossoming maize fields, and tall canopy trees.

The rains are plenty, almost throughout the year, but that the youth are reluctant to make use of. Most youth laze around the shopping centres without engaging in economic opportunities that abound such as making ballast from the potential quarries.

An upsurge in crime has been recorded with most youth opting to join criminal gangs such as Sungusungu, Chinkororo, and other vigilantes that roam the countryside in search of villagers deemed to be witches.

The villagers say that muggings and other ills have gripped the entire society in this hilly, ever-green, part of Kenya. But it's in this rich countryside, where Ronald Gisore, 33, and a beneficiary of Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) now looks after his two dairy Friesian cows,

tends his millet and banana farm, and runs a community library.

“Unfortunately, most of the youth run away from responsibilities and insist that agriculture is not a priority,” Gisore says.

As he works in his millet farm, he recounts the long journey that has made him a farmer in this sector that most youth in Kenya have shied away from, in pursuit of white collar jobs in towns across Kenya.

“I thought that for me to succeed in life, I had to be a politician. But after the KCDF training, my eyes have opened to the fact leading oneself into getting something to do is one step towards self leadership,” he says.

Life has not been smooth for this young man. He says: “I was born in a polygamous family. My only brother is mentally impaired, so most of the work depended upon me.”

Losing his father in 1996 was a huge blow to the family. He says: “I had to do most of the things.” Later, he tried his hand in politics and contested for



the Sironga civic ward in 1997 and lost. Unbowed, he tried again in 2002 and lost.

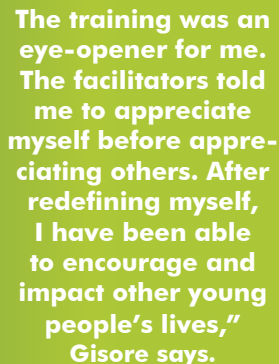
It was a disheartening experience for him to lose in two consecutive elections “You see, when I was young I wanted to be a parliamentarian. I thought that this way, I could decisively deal with issues that affect our society,” he says pointing to his home library which also serves students around his homestead.

It became difficult for Gisore to convince and mobilise his community on governance, participation, democracy, human rights, and health.

But just when he was beginning to sit back and perhaps, feel helpless, he got an opportunity to undergo training on leadership, communication skills, relational skills and conflict resolution.

“The training was an eye-opener for me. The facilitators told me to appreciate myself before appreciating others. After redefining myself, I have been able to encourage and impact other young people’s lives,” Gisore says.

He used to be a tough




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character, almost unyielding. “I always told people what to do, and criticized alot. But KCDF’s training that stressed the need for self-evaluation before you can evaluate others, helped me a lot,” he remembers.

“To start off, I got a loan from a merry-go-round loan scheme and bought my two cows that I believe will give me some milk soon. Apart from that I have a farm of onions, millet, and bananas,” he says.

Gisore has a broader vision for his community. He plans to set up a programme for orphaned children. “There are a lot of orphans that have no



guardians. What I have done is to involve the chairman of District Development Committee and he has assured me support in this regard,”he says.

He also plans to start a green house project to grow horticultural crops. “I have about 800 tea bushes which are currently getting ready for picking. When I get the money, I plan to reinvest my proceeds back into a green house project,”he says.

As is the mantra with every KCDF trainee, Gisore mentors others around him too. “I have trained 10 youth at Gusii Institute, 30 youth in Tendera Primary School, 20 youth at Nyamue Primary school, 20 people in Sironga Primary, and a workshop training of 25 participants,” he attests.

“My training sessions mostly involve participatory methods as this allows the input of others,” he says. He employs questions-answer method to get feedback from the participants before winding up group discussions.

Although he faces the challenge of limited resources to implement his plans, he is not about to give up. He wants to stretch himself to the best he can be in the most difficult conditions.



170^{CP}
shabaa

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Zipporah MUGURE



Always tending to seedlings and supporting needy children to access scholarship opportunities, Zipporah qualifies to be called Miss. Green and mother Teresa at the same time.

Zipporah Mugure was born and raised in Kimende, along the Nakuru-Nairobi highway. As a child she witnessed many lives being lost due to accidents on the busy highway.

She knew all too well that if the accident victims were rushed to hospital, they would have survived, but more often than not, the victims bled profusely while awaiting rescue.

"A lot of my friends lost their lives along this highway and I think this happened because there was no hospital here at Kimende to respond to my friends that were ran over by speeding matatus," she says.

Mugure's dream was to become a nurse and subsequently put up a dispensary that would cater for accident victims at Kimende.

"The problem here was that when accidents occurred, only villagers with little knowledge on how to perform first aid would come out to help," says Mugure.

Born in 1979, she attended Kimende Primary School and later joined Njambini Secondary School. Due to lack of school fees and the constant worry of domestic feuds between her parents, she did not excel in her KCSE exams.

Her below-average performance in forth form exams made it difficult for her to find place in most colleges. "I could not even attend the nursing course that I had desired for



a long time," Mugure says.

Being the first born in a family of five girls, Mugure has had to balance between helping her single mother take care of the siblings and trying to further her education. "It has not been easy at all. As the first born, I wanted to be a good leader. Furthermore, I needed to help my mum raise the rest of my siblings," she explains.

In 2008, she joined Pinnacle School of Business and did Kenya Accounts and Technician Certificate (KATC). Upon completion of her studies, she was offered a job as a finance officer at Kijabe Environmental Volunteers (KENVO).

KENVO is an environmental community based organization whose core activity is reforestation of forestland within Kijabe. Mugure's job at KENVO involves accounting for all the project funds, preparing financial reports, and assisting youth programmes.

"While working here, I was invited by KCDF to participate in an accounting and statutory regulation workshop dubbed 'Finance Clinic,'" she remembers.

At this workshop, Mugure and others were taken through the KCDF's requirements that are necessary before funds are disbursed to any grantee. Mugure recounts: "At the 'Finance Clinic' we were informed on accountability, statutory regulations,

and restrictions."

"Soon after 'Finance Clinic,' I was again selected to attend leadership training in Nakuru. From this week-long workshop, I learnt that for a project to succeed, one has to adhere to leadership principles," she says.

She has also improved her communication skills. "As a result of the training, I have come to appreciate the fact that one must be well versed with whatever is supposed to be communicated to an audience," Mugure says.

Today, she appreciates everybody and their opinions. She expounds: "before, I thought that being learned is what gives substance and excellent opinions, but I have since appreciated that every opinion counts."

In partnership with Canada World Youth, Mugure and KENVO have organized an exchange programme.

"In an effort to help the youth who cannot afford secondary education, I have also helped set up a scholarship foundation to help the less fortunate youth afford further education," she reveals.

The foundation is known as 'Education is Power' and has so far taken over five youth through high school and are now in various universities undertaking different courses.

As a future plan, Mugure has embarked on a campaign to expand the operations of KENVO out of Kijabe. "As part of personal development, I have joined Kenya Institute of Management (KIM) where I am undertaking Diploma in Business Management," she says.

For Mugure, what she has undergone under KCDF's caring and watchful eye is a lifetime treasure. "My wish is that many would be beneficiaries of the same," she says.

"It has not been easy at all. As the first born, I wanted to be a good leader. Furthermore, I needed to help my mum raise the rest of my siblings"





Martin Nyamu



Martin Nyamu, was a criminal and an alcohol addict. He attempted suicide several times. He shares his life as addict, to rehab, and his ultimate encounter with KCDF.

In Kenya, many young people abuse drugs. Getting ‘high’ on cocaine, marijuana, and cigarettes seems to be the way of life for most youth. Peer pressure appear to be the major factor that drive drug abuse, with alcohol and bhang being the most common.

According to The National Agency for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse Authority (NACADA), alcohol is abused by 77 per cent of youth out of school and 28 per cent of youth in school.

Surveys carried out by Nacada show that over 30 per cent of Kenyans aged between 15 and 65 years have tasted alcohol, and at least 13 per cent from all provinces are habitual consumers of alcohol. Martin Nyamu is one of the young people whose name features in these grim statistics.

Martin was a victim of alcohol abuse, an addiction that almost destroyed his life.

During the 1982 coup Martin’s mother had to

travel from Nairobi to the rural town of Nyeri where he was later born. The first born in his family, he was supposed to be the family’s torch bearer, but his life, just like his birth, became so turbulent later in life.

Nyamu started consuming alcohol for fun. But now as he looks back, he agrees that what started as fun would be the beast that would turn him against his family and push him to the point of several suicide attempts.

“I started taking alcohol in high school. Since nobody knew about it, I thought all would be fine but when I went to school in Uganda it became worse I had to discontinue my education,”he painfully remembers.

At Makerere University, Nyamu says that his alcohol intake worsened so much that he started losing weight. “I became violent. Everyone lost trust in me when I came back to Kenya. I started stealing prop-





KCDF found me when I needed someone to realign me. They got me at a time when I wanted to remake myself and to mend fences with people who had lost trust in me . Sharpening my leadership abilities has helped me to truly act like the first born and show leadership in my family.

erty from my home, mugging people. It became so bad I wouldn't even get time to shower," he reflects.

"Instead of becoming the role model, I became the opposite. My family was so frustrated with my embarrassing behaviour that they no longer wanted me at home," he adds.

It reached a point that it became so worse, a situation which then forced him to get help from counsellors. When his life was just starting to get back to normal, after barely a month, Nyamu relapsed. Life worsened. During this time one of his friends, also an addict, committed suicide.

"I saw how badly my friend cut short his life. I was not going to do that, so I decided to go to a rehabilitation centre," he painfully remembers.

At Teens Camp, a Kiambu based Christian rehabilitation centre for drug addicts, Lukas Orimba one of the staff told Nyamu that there was an opportunity to change.

"I took up the opportunity," Nyamu says.

He has never looked back.

"KCDF found me when I needed someone to realign me. They got me at a time when I wanted to remake myself and to mend fences with people who had lost trust in me . Sharpening my leadership abilities has helped me to truly act like the first born and show leadership

in my family," Nyamu says.

"I have picked up the pieces and decided to lead myself towards a better life," he confidently says. He has since then risen through the ranks of Orion Youth Group – a Kiambu based group to become the group's leader.

"Our youth group was about to break up due to leadership wrangles, but the leadership training of KCDF has given me a whole new approach to leading others," says Nyamu.

Bernard who directs the Teen Camp says that Nyamu has had a major transformation from the training.

He says: "I am very pleased especially by his change of heart and the zeal and readiness to help others. It is amazing that people that were lost can rebound and show such enthusiasm towards changing the environment around them."

Nyamu has gone the extra mile and impacted other lives through conducting trainings on leadership. "I have trained six leaders that have in turn trained the members of their respective groups," he adds.

To train others, Nyamu has been using the manual given out during the KCDF training.

The biggest challenge that he faces, is lack of resources to efficiently organize workshops.

"Another challenge is that many youth underestimate our knowledge in training and therefore sometimes think that we have nothing to offer," Nyamu adds.

Thanks to the KCDF training and subsequent trainings that he has attended, Nyamu has met like-minded people. "The trainings have helped me learn about innovative ways that people and groups employ in mentoring youth," he says.

Nyamu looks forward to a Kenya, indeed a world where the youth shall refrain from peer pressure and drug abuse.



ENOS ODIDI

Enos comes from a humble background; today he gives his best to improve his community

Odidi had the passion to become an electrical engineer but his dream was dashed when he was unable to join high school due to lack of school fees.

Settling for better half a loaf than none at all, he decided to make do by joining a vocational training institute.

"I was very disappointed when my dad told me that I wasn't going to join secondary school. But ours

was a struggling family and I had to make do with what was available," says Odidi.

His father, however, opted for the more affordable option: taking Odidi to a vocational training centre where he would acquire technical skills. "I was determined to do everything to attain secondary education. So I registered as a private candidate. For one year, without a coach or teacher, I literally buried myself into books," he says.

Even though he didn't pass his exams well, the grade D+ that he obtained, he says, was a great achievement, bearing in mind that he had to struggle on his own, it was one dream realised. Having received leadership training from KCDF), Odidi has redefined himself, raised the bar and influenced the world around him.

The fifth born in a family of seven, Odidi has leadership skills and over the years he has tried to channel them in different ways. Naturally a poet, a lyricist, playwright, and thinker, his life has been greatly transformed, thanks

to KCDF training.

"I am a leader but I did not know how to effectively be so. I was poor in communication. I was reluctant to stand before people. My speech was slow and lacking in articulation. Even passing information was difficult for me," Odidi says.

He has since overcome his shortcomings. Other than attitude change towards life, he has now mastered the art of effective communication and articulation, giving his best not just to himself but to his peers and to those that look up to him for direction and a better future.

"Today I have to read the mood of my audience and readjust appropriately on their reaction. I listen to various opinions and factor them in whatever project that is at hand. This makes the people I work with trust that their opinions count," he says.

Odidi is now more purposeful; his goals and objectives are clearer and he has set targets for himself. He plans to follow his dream of becoming an electrical



engineer. This includes acquiring a university degree in Linguistics and music.

He adds: "I also want to be a source of inspiration and empowerment to fellow youth."

KCDF's leadership has helped him to re-energize his group, Ebenezer Youth Programme. He has also been able to disseminate the knowledge he gained to others, through training 12 leaders of his group.

"After the training, I gave them an opportunity to lead. Each person is currently leading at least twenty other youth," Odidi explains.

These groups are divided into other sub-units such as drama, poetry, music, dance, and other seasonal projects. Though not a professional, Odidi has learned to play guitar and now teaches others. Apart from directly training people, Odidi has socialised himself into different groups where he also takes key roles.

'Celebrate Recovery' is a weekly meeting that draws youth from his hometown, Rongai – a suburb in Nairobi - and its environs. Odidi says that the weekly meetings involve sharing together, spreading love and oneness in the community. This has given them more understanding especially after the post-election violence of 2007 elections.

"We tell the youth that love for each other is an asset that all have to appreciate. Again, we encourage them that being a leader must not mean being a politician or some CEO but rather a self-exploration and knowledge of oneself,"

Odidi explains.

He has also dedicated his time to a music band named SAM which comprises of students from Multimedia University in Mbagathi, Nairobi. He meets them occasionally to encourage them to be good leaders and influencers of their own lives and that of others.

Kevin Gathi is under Odidi's mentorship. He says that Odidi has impacted his life positively. "He is a reconciler. Right now he is taking me and the others through the book *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. Odidi knows where he is coming from and where he wants to take the people he is leading. I admire him so much," says his mentee, Kevin."

"He listens keenly and talks to people, and is more open on issues," says Rudolf Adiva, one of the back-up singers at his church – Deliverance Church.

Challenges abound which sometimes drag the pace at which they want to add to their knowledge and plans they want to undertake.

"There are people who do not want to open up. They simply trust no one with whatever is bothering them. They defend whatever is happening to them. Some people who are aged also deride us when we approach them with information that we've learned and proved to be working," Odidi says.

Odidi has confronted his challenges and overcome most, yet he confesses, there is a lot more to be done.



I am a leader but I did not know how to effectively be so. I was poor in communication. I was reluctant to stand before people. My speech was slow and lacking in articulation. Even passing information was difficult for me.

Odidi says.



Sarah Atieno

Born in Ugunja town, a town ravaged by prostitution, HIV and AIDS, Sarah Atieno has survived the temptations and become a role model to the local girls.

Ugunja is a small town just half an hours drive from Lake Victoria in Nyanza Province. The abundance of fish and business that come with it places it as one of the areas that have been worst hit by HIV/AIDS in the region.

According to Kenya's Centre for the Study of Adolescence, Nyanza has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the country, as well as one of the highest school dropout rates. On average, girls in Nyanza become sexually active at the age of 16 compared to age 19 in Nairobi Province.

Extreme poverty appears to be the reason why girls here become sexually active at an early age. According to IRIN, a project of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 60 percent of residents live on less than US\$1 per day, and the region also has the largest number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS epidemic.

This is where Sarah Atieno was born and raised. For a young girl, it has been both economically difficult and socially tempting living in an area where overconsumption



of local brews and a carefree lifestyle is rampant. "People drink here till morning," says Atieno.

"During the day, it is a rather quiet town but when night falls, the locals that have been fishing along the Lake shores start trickling into town," adds Atieno.

Atieno, the fourth born in a family of six, made a commitment, when she was still young, to restrain herself from the risky lifestyle in her community. She wanted to prosper in life. Atieno's upbringing had struggles which she blames on family issues. "My father was interdicted as a veterinary officer when I was young. It was very difficult time for the family," she remembers.

She had wanted to be a doctor but after witnessing her dad, a doctor of some sorts, being destroyed by alcohol abuse, she decided to abandon that dream.

Due to lack of school fees, Atieno dropped out of school for a year. "I finished high school by sheer luck. My mother had to convince my head teacher at Jera Secondary school to keep allocating some bursary for me," she remembers.

Well aware of her background and the struggles she had been through to get an education, Atieno worked very hard in high school.

But when the final exams for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) were announced, she unfortunately, missed university pass mark by only two points.

"I was very discouraged and disappointed," she painfully remembers. Refusing to let go, she enrolled for a diploma course in Community Development at Siaya Institute of Technology.

Lack of school fees again forced her out of the institute at certificate level. She then joined an NGO called Omega Foundation as an intern.

While she was volunteering at Omega Foun-

dation in Ahero, Kisumu, she was nominated to participate in the KCDF Youth Leadership training. On the training, Sarah recalls: "The training workshop helped me know just who I wanted to become, but the most rewarding thing was to help me see how I could talk before a group of people and the necessary skills for training others," she remembers.

"My friends say that I have considerably changed after the training and that the way I handle things has improved," she says.

She now works with Tembea Youth Centre in Siaya District, Ugunja Town. Tembea Youth Centre for Sustainable Development is an indigenous community based development organization based in Siaya District, Nyanza Province, Kenya.

Founded in 2003, Tembea's main goal is to enhance and improve the livelihoods of the youth and other community members by supporting them to venture into income generating activities and conservation, among others.

Atieno, after undergoing KCDF training, has become an asset to Tembea Youth Centre. The Director of the Centre concurs: "there is a great proficiency in her after the training. She delivers to the group's satisfaction and that is why I specifically put her in charge of welfare."

Atieno has trained Ombede Women group and Ligega Women Group which comprises of 20 women living with HIV/AIDS. Her teaching revolves around economic stability, and how to deal with oneself. "I convince them that being diagnosed with HIV/AIDS doesn't mean that one's life comes tumbling down," she says.

As part of her future plans, she is currently saving part of her allowances that she gets from Tembea Youth Centre to complete her course and earn a Diploma.





DAVID NJIHIA

David Njihia knows why street kids should be the concern of everyone

If David Njihia was living his childhood dream today, he would be in some Doctors Plaza attending to people with toothaches. His office would be a posh one with mohair carpet and heavily padded chairs.

Contrastingly, his job today is in the dingiest of slums, open sewers, and crossroads. He rehabilitates street boys and girls who desire to live well and go to school but instead live behind litter bins and dilapidated buildings.

"I don't regret putting a smile on the faces of these kids. I feel like I owe it to them," Njihia says. His life paints a picture of twists and turns. Perhaps it's his personal growth that has realigned his dreams, readjusted his priority, and given him such passion towards street children.

Born in 1982 in Kiambu, Njihia grew up with his grandmother – from the tender age of four – when his step father was transferred to a different town. "I wanted to be a doctor, specifically a dentist because I was fascinated by teeth and would have liked to help people having trouble with their teeth," Njihia says.

Njihia attended Karugo Primary school. Around this time, his mother got married to his step father, Steven Nzimbi. "When my step dad, was transferred to Limuru, my mother took me with her," Njihia remembers.

"My stepfather was very cruel to me. This was a challenging experience for me," he painfully recollects.

Determined to pursue his dream, Njihia passed his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). He then proceeded to Kanunge High School between 1998 and 2001. He later joined Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC).

"When I approached my step dad to help me get school fees, he plainly told me that there were more important issues to deal with. My dream of becoming a dentist was shattered," he pain-



fully recalls.

By this time, the family was living in Dagoretti, Nairobi. Unsure of what to do, he joined a group called Young Artists, a community based organization in Karen.

"Most of the youth involved were street boys from the neighbouring Dagoretti slums. So we walked together to Karen every morning," Njihia remembers. On sharing with them, he realized that most of these street kids were genuinely homeless.

These street kids, he says, longed for a better life and education.

"In 2003, my friend Michael Mungai and I decided to start a programme that would help these kids go back to school. We named it Dagoretti For Kids. I was the volunteer project coordinator," he says. "We wanted them to feel loved. We, therefore, involved them in soccer matches, playing checkers, and other games," he adds.

The group grew fast and with the support of other well-wishers, they rented some space and set up a fully fledged home for the kids. Njihia and his friend then talked to head teachers around Dagoretti who then allowed the boys to learn in their schools.

By running such a noble initiative it was not difficult to be spotted by like-minded organizations. KCDF got wind of the good work he was doing and enlisted him for training on Leadership and Reconciliation in Meru, Kenya.

KCDF training gave Njihia leadership skills that have seen him reinvent not only himself but also

the street kids.

"I lacked confidence to approach older street kids. But today, I am more confident enough to sweet-talk even dangerous street kids," he confidently says.

It is also this training that helped him to let go off the bitterness he had harboured against his parents for the difficult life that he went through.


After the training, Njihia started a scouting group known as Changes Rover Crew, a 25 member team that deals with behaviour change. The group also does community work such as tree planting and owns a magazine that publishes stories about youth talents.

To equip more people, Njihia has conducted a workshop in Kiambu on leadership for four days. "This was a youth empowerment camp that hosted 120 participants. I have also held youth forums in Central Kenya, Nairobi and Mombasa and a peace mission to Bungoma where 23 people participated," he says.

As part of his future plans, he wants to finish a Project Management course at the School of Global Youth Against Aids.

Today, life to him is not about what has been lost but what one can go for. As such, he has decided to utilize every opportunity that comes.

"My main challenge now is time to carry out most of my volunteering as I am currently on a full time job," says Njihia. "When I look to the future it is so bright it burns my eyes. Success is a matter of preparation awaiting opportunity," he concludes, quoting Oprah Winfrey.




I lacked confidence to approach older street kids. But today, I am more confident enough to sweet-talk even dangerous street kids





ANDREW MAKHANU



Andrew Makhanu witnessed the Eldoret's bloodbath during the Kenyan post election violence of 2007, but now determined to foster togetherness in the nation, he preaches peace through football.

Some say leaders are born while others maintain that they are made. But Andrew Makhanu believes in both. He believes that he is a hybrid of the two.

"I believe that everyone is born a leader, only that the leadership skills should be sharpened, positively realigned and appropriately articulated," he says.

Andrew started his schooling at Naitiri Primary School. At the school, he was he was made the sanitary prefect while still a junior and later became a senior prefect. At high school he was made assistant head prefect in form two then shortly he was elevated as the school's head-prefect.

"Even though it was always challenging, I found myself in position of leadership. Everyone saw a leader in me," he intimates.

Makhanu was raised without his biological mother. "My mum separated with my father when I was 5 years old. I remember how difficult it was for me to cope without my mum at that tender age," he says, looking back at his tumultuous childhood.

Being from a polygamous family, Makhanu was taken in by one of his step-mothers. "It was not easy at all. I didn't have good clothes. Even getting paraffin for my study tin lamp was a challenge," he painfully recalls.

Despite these problems, sometimes feeling hated and having no sense of belonging, he has never lost hope. He did what every poor child with zeal would do. He worked hard and made sure that he was always in school.

KCDF has also impacted him with listening skills. “These days I let others talk and take their opinions into account ,” he says.

He would struggle through school. After primary school, Makhanu joined B-PASS Secondary school from 2004 to 2007.”

“After High School I wanted to find a way of supporting myself. I, therefore, decided to be a waiter in a local bar in December 2007 until February 2009. The bar job was too chaotic and involved a lot quarrelling. I would go without sleep for a long time,” remembers Makhanu. After so much stress, he quit and joined a football team called A-Step Football Club.

During the 2007-2008 Kenya’s post election violence, there was need to bring people together. “Kimumu, where I lived, witnessed the heaviest fighting and killings. I saw houses being torched. People were being killed ruthlessly, and property looted,” he narrates.

He adds: “There was nothing one could do during the fight. Everyone was trying to keep safe, but when the fighting cooled down and people became internally displaced, we decided to divide ourselves into two groups. One group went to the community while the other team reached out to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). At last we were able to unite the two warring communities.”

It was while he was engaged in reconciliation efforts that he participated in KCDF training on leadership and conflict management. “It came at a time when communication was my biggest



challenge. I needed to address the suspicion and misunderstanding between the two communities, but my communication skills was too wanting,” he explains.

“I was naturally a short-tempered person. I detested correction and always thought that I was perfect,” he remembers. “But when KCDF trained me, I was able to control my anger. I also used to talk to people in a quarrelling pitch, but the training equipped me with public speaking skills. I become more persuasive than quarrelsome,” he adds.

“These days I let others talk and take their opinions into account ,” he says.

After the training, Makokha has trained many other young people. So far, A-Step, where he is one of the leading volunteers, has seen the formation of 24 football teams around Eldoret. Some of the teams are in Langas, Huruma, Kimumu, Munyaka, and Kisinede, some of the areas that bore the brunt of the post election violence.

At A-Step’s offices, one is welcomed by a banner written “Peace is not everything but without peace everything is nothing.” “This is what we believe in,” explains Makhanu.

Makhanu now believes in change and personal transformation. “My future plan is to model people. When young people change, the world changes,” he says.



John Mulingwa

He was a rebel, a thorn in the flesh of Pumwani police, but John Mulingwa is now the champion of Pumwani's cleanliness and an anti-drug and anti-crime campaigner.



Pumwani Estate is located in the heart of Nairobi City. This small yet infamous estate borders the sprawling Majengo slum which hosts one of the biggest commercial sex dens in the city. The roads are narrow, dusty and the smell of fresh open sewers constitutes the air around, causing a putrid smell to the passersby. Crime is almost part of daily life here.

John Mulingwa was a young man on the run when he got the opportunity to participate in a leadership training seminar organized by the KCDF, in August, 2009. He says his best friend had been shot by police and he had organized a riot to petition the police against the killing.

Today, he is the chairman of 34 Youth Group - a stable youth initiative that runs a pay toilet and a garbage collection business.

But Mulingwa wasn't a young man to struggle this way. There were easier ways of surviving in this dilapidated part of the wider cosmopolitan Nairobi.

Apart from maintaining the facility, Mulingwa and his group have a garbage collection initiative. They do this by giving out

polythene bags to Pumwani households that pay Kshs. 20.00 for each bag. They then collect the bags filled with garbage from the households every week and then replace for the next collection.

"We are looking at achieving two things in doing this. One is conserving our environment from litter, especially polythene. In the process of keeping the environment clean, we also get some little money from it," Mulingwa explains.

But what might have given the 26 year-old Mulingwa this sense of self-rediscovery? How did he realize that it squarely depended on him to salvage his life?

"*Mazee hii story ya KCDF training imenichange tu sana. (Man, the KCDF training that I underwent changed my life very much),*" he says in Sheng, the popular language, in this part of Nairobi. Mulingwa,



the second last born in a family of seven explains. As he says this, he is seated in a small office; the one thing that he never thought would happen to him.

Having dropped out of school in class seven at St. John's Primary, Mulingwa did not know what to do. He had lost a clear sense of life's meaning. "My parents could not take me to school. Even the far I went at St. John's Primary was just by sheer luck," he explains.

After the training he organized himself and even brought in two of his sisters who he now hosts in his own house. "Before the training I had a very negative perception of life. I was a rough person, highly tempered and difficult to deal with. I was always in bad books with the police," Mulingwa confesses.

"He was in a pathetic condition. He didn't seem to know what he wanted in life. Our training was to him just a one-week hideout from the authorities," says KCDF's Assistant Youth Co-ordinator, Mr. Peter Mabonga.

Shaaban Kanyege, the assistant chairman of 34 Youth Group agrees that the change of mind – perhaps even of Mulingwa's heart - is very conspicuous. He says that Mulingwa had been a rough and violent person, even rebellious. This earned him the nick name 'Garang'. John Garang De Mabior is the late South Sudanese rebel Commander.

"He would hardly cooperate with anyone among us. It was either Garang's way or no way. But now he listens to people. No one possibly knew that he would change this way. But the training changed him, and he is leading us the right way," observes Kanyege.

When Mulingwa talks of his goals and objectives, his sense of grip and control of himself is awesomely evident. From time to time, he stops midsentence to gauge if the message he is passing across is being well received.

"Apart from changing my attitude and believing in myself and what I can do, my number one objective is to bring the youth of Pumwani together in planning out a better discourse that we should take from here. This criminal mentality is not helping us. But on the other hand, I cannot blame them because nobody cares about them – about us," he says.

It's for this reason that he has revived Pumwani Youth Group Network whose main agenda is to sensitize the youth of Pumwani to to address their challenges instead of crying foul and doing nothing about it.

Pumwani Youth Network's core objective is to engage the youth positively in such activities as taking care of their locality and environment. They do garbage collection, clearing up blocked sewage through the help of Nairobi City Council and also engaging and encouraging self sustaining activities. The group also gives support to the youths struggling with drugs and crime.

Already, the youth have started a football team to foster togetherness and understanding among these youth. Mulingwa has ensured that others are trained on leadership, communication and relational skills.

"I have trained all the 16 members of my group and urge them to do the same to the people that they interact with, whether at home or at the work place," he says.

"I am inspired by what we have achieved in Pumwani. We will continue reaching out to more young people. We hopeful," he says.



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shabaa





Gloria Orimba

GLORIA, a beautiful, young, and stylish lady, puts aside her pride to get into the male business of garbage collection and putting a smile to orphaned children

Gloria Orimba is one of the unfortunate children whose childhood was heavily disrupted every time their parents were transferred from their jobs.. Her father, Vincent Onyango, a doctor by profession, had to move from one hospital to the other.

By the time she was sitting her exam, Orimba had studied in five different high schools, an experience that left her frustrated and angry. "I always asked myself why I was always the one following my parents while my two sisters were doing fine in boarding schools?" she remembers.

"As if the transfer wasn't enough torture, my grand-

mother who should have given me love hated me because we didn't have a boy in our family," she adds.

Born in 1988, and the fourth born in a family of five, Orimba and her family moved to Kitale in 1997.

At one point Gloria had to repeat form three due to lack of school fees. "My dad had been retrenched and subsequently got very sick. His sickness left us with no money for school fees," she painfully remembers.

But what would later plague her in life after school was her sense of low esteem. She remembers: "When I finished school and was now living in Migosi estate, Kisumu, I began to meet girls in the estate who were in well known schools. This made me feel like an under-achiever. When people talked about issues relating to their days in high school, I would simply withdraw or remain quiet."

Gloria stayed for sometime without a job until she was introduced by a friend to Kisumu Upper Youth Group. "It was my first time to join such a youth group. We did garbage collection around the area estates for free and also went to various places spreading cautious messages about the spread of HIV/AIDS,"

1 leader.
7 values.
infinite possibilities



They also advised the youth on the dangers of irresponsible sexual behaviour.

Nyanza, by that time, already had a high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of 15 percent compared to the national average of 6.7 percent, according to the 2003 Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS).

"We mostly conducted outreach visits in the city schools and halls around town. It was not easy but we tried as much as we could," she remembers. Orimba especially found it difficult to get involved in garbage collection.

"It wasn't me. I cared so much about my image, and doing this was making it worse given my wounded ego," she reveals.

After sometime the group started charging Kshs. 50 per week for garbage collection services.

"We wanted to earn something out of what we were doing, so every week we took away the used polyethylene trash bags that we had given earlier in exchange for a cleaner bag," she explains.

While still at Kisumu Upper Youth group, she got a position as a volunteer at CADAMIC, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Kisumu town.

The NGO works with children and young people as well as development partners. It conducts capacity building workshops targeting the youth, orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Kisumu's slums and its environs.

Even though a lot of her time is today spent at CADAMIC, she has maintained her allegiance to the Kisumu Upper Youth Group. She regularly takes part in the group's projects.

It was the training by KCDF on leadership, communication, relational skills, and conflict resolution that has helped her to reevaluate her strengths and weaknesses.

"KCDF changed me greatly she confesses. "I was very hurt and my ego had been broken by the kind of life that I led. But I remember the first thing I was told by KCDF was that what had happened cannot be altered and I had to accept that and move on," she adds

After the training, she realised that she had to put behind whatever had happened. "The facilitators told me that the only noble thing to do was to stand up again, dust myself, and pick up the pieces," she remembers.

Her work-mate at CADAMIC, Berlin Achieng, agrees: "Orimba has become a very responsible person after the training. She is an honest and respectable lady."

It was not easy but there was nothing easier than doing just that. Apart from dealing squarely with her self-esteem, she had to sharpen her leadership skills. "I wasn't good at addressing people, but the training gave me the courage and wherewithal to stand before people and share," she says. After the training, giving back has been her main aim. "I offer support and counselling to the orphans club called Knit and Chat within CADAMIC," she says.

She has also trained 45 girls of Knit and Chat on reproductive health and given a lecture to 80 students at Liberty Secondary School.

"My only challenge is time and resources to conduct the trainings and workshops that I would like to do in the near future," she says.

Orimba has her goals and objectives well mapped out. "First I want to have a family and be sensitive to my children, especially their upbringing. I don't want my kids to go through what I went through," she says.

"I also want to equip the youth with entrepreneurial skills," Orimba says.



ANTHONY KOCHIYO

Anthony has changed the youth through his public lectures on leadership and attitude change and now he appears to be the epitome of upcoming youth leaders keen on changing both the political leadership and governance.

“When our daily bread is made stale by the fungi of tribalism and our wine poisoned by the bacteria of ethnicity then let us allow justice to be our shield and defender!” Anthony Kochiyo said while giving the closing remarks of the National Youth Convention organized by the KCDF in Nakuru, Kenya.

His face is soft – almost lacking in the gait of a leader, the grandeur of an orator, or the gem in a youth that has anything to offer. But when he mounts the podium, his words reflect a young man who has passion for what he believes in.

Anthony Kochiyo is a leader per excellence, an orator with crisp and cryptic command of language. He is a discussant who breathes life to the issues at hand.

Kochiyo was born in the remote area of Siaya. When he joined primary school, he says, he found life very rough and fast.

“I remember being beaten by a class eight pupil when I was in class two, but when I reported to my dad, he told me to stop being naïve. He asked me if I lacked hands to fight back when someone hit me,” Kochiyo remembers.

Brought up by a teacher who was later promoted to the position of inspector of schools, Kochiyo was comfortable until later. Life became very difficult after he did Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE).

“This was the most painful part of my life,” remembers Kochiyo. His first day in form one is particularly very memorable to him. “My father had been retrenched and had not been paid for four months. I remember I had a bad tooth ache just days before joining form one. My dad, therefore, decided to use my shopping money to offset the hospital bill,” he recounts.

When his dad finally took him to school, the only juice that the father had bought him could not be allowed in school as students at that time laced squashes with liquor. “It was both painful and funny. I literally went



without anything. To add salt to injury, he went back with the Kshs. 150 that he was to give me as pocket money," he remembers. Chianda High School, Kochiyo says, was run like a military base. "Everything was fast. Eat fast, bathe fast, and do everything fast. But I was a 'softy' which means that I was one of the last students to be served. The back-to-class bell would ring even before I touched my food," he says.

He literally went hungry in the first week of his reporting. This taught him that life is rough and whoever wanted to make it in life had to be forceful, rough and tough," Kochiyo laments "Even the head teacher had to send me home for school fees just nine days before exams. I walked 20 kms to reach home," he painfully recollects.

These sad experiences misshaped and wounded the young man's heart. He says that life became very distasteful for him even when he joined Mombasa Polytechnic to study Mass Communication.

But now the 23 year-old stands with his head high. I have beaten the odds and lifted myself from the valley of despair to the sunlit path of self-invention," says Kochiyo in his typical poetic style.

"After high school, I joined a theatre group known as Ugenya Community Against HIV and Aids (UCAHA). We would go to schools and town centres performing on issues such as peer education and spreading positive message about HIV and Aids," he says.

"KCDF got to know me through UCAHA. I was then enlisted to go for training in Meru. The training was dubbed "Leadership Skills for 21st Century," he recollects. Kochiyo agrees that the training was a turn-around for him. "What I remember from the training is the black and white way of thinking. I used to say that whatever is wrong is wrong and what is right is right, but through the training, I realized that there is always a middle ground in any thorny issue," he says.

He confesses that he never used to give people a listening ear. "I used to attack people whenever I felt

that they were wrong. I would judge people through their case histories. I later realized that this was a very harsh way of treating others. I have since known better. People should be given an ear. This conviction has influenced the way I conduct my trainings," confesses Kochiyo.

Diphus Kiprop, Kochiyo's personal friend and a colleague in various training workshops agrees that Kochiyo is an accomplished leader and a promising asset to Kenya's future leadership.

"Kochiyo is a very committed leader who is ready to volunteer in any project," says Kiprop. He adds that Kochiyo always makes sacrifices in order to offer his services free of charge.

Today, he now heads the environmental department UCAHA. "I head the team that goes around talking to members of the community about the dangers of environmental degradation and conservation," he says.

UCAHA conducts outreach activities on the dangers of HIV and Aids through theatre and peer education. "We also have a peace training that is sponsored by United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), in which we teach the youth to appreciate the diversity of culture," Kochiyo explains.

UCAHA also runs an ICT centre which is equipped with 14 computers. The centre enrolls the youth around the community to learn computer packages and other related skills.

To equip others, Kochiyo has trained 50 young people in Eldoret. He has also conducted training sessions on conflict management and reconciliation in Segwa (Siaya) and Rarieda.

He admits that he faces many challenges such as lack of resource materials but is still confident that he will continue to impact more young people.

Kochiyo is happy with what he has achieved so far, but he is fired up to continue scaling the heights of success.

Fred Wakoli

From childhood, Wakoli has had a passion for the sick, and now after beating life odds, he stands in the gap between Tulienge dwellers and ravaging diseases.



After KCDF's training, I have turned my weaknesses into formidable strengths. I am no longer timid or scared of people. I view life positively.

The sight of women with babies strapped on their backs is a normal spectacle in the small village called Tulienge in Bungoma West District. They are women who have to trudge 6 kilometres of the cold and rocky Mount Elgon in order to access the only community clinic in the area.

But while this can be termed as a common occurrence in most Kenyan villages, Fred Wakoli has always found this life difficult for the poor women and feels that it can be made better. This is why his dream has always been to study medicine so that he can make health care accessible to most Tulienge dwellers.

"From class five my vision was to be in the medical field. It has been so sad seeing people walk long distances just to access health care, something I believe is very key to the survival of every man, woman and child," says Wakoli.

Today Wakoli is happy to be a laboratory technician in his own village. "Just as I had dreamt, I am not only a lab technician right in the village but

also a community health worker and a trainer of trainees (TOT)," Wakoli says with enthusiasm.

Wakoli believed so much in his dream that the odds against him had to pave way. To get where he is now, was not a walk in the park. He had to trek long distances to and from school. He also, sometimes, lacked education materials.

His schooling started at Tororo Primary School before joining Bokoli Boys School in 1994. From 1995 to 1997 he relocated to St. Anthony's Sirisia where he took Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams.

"I remember my days in school as a very timid boy without confidence. I never viewed life positively. I came from a polygamous family and I had a feeling that our family was inferior given that my mother was the youngest wife," he remembers.

Under pressure to get back and change his society, Wakoli, in 1999, enrolled as a volunteer with



the Aga Khan Foundation as a community health worker. "Working with the foundation was my first stint with the communities. I enjoyed it and was ready to always learn," remembers Wakoli.

The community, he says, has been very receptive of him and always seeks his help on matters pertaining to health.

In 1999, Wakoli married his wife Christine Lukike with whom they still live together. They have two sons, Wesley Wakoli and Bradley Wakoli.

It was going to be difficult for Wakoli to impact lives without relevant education. This prompted him to cross the border into the neighbouring Uganda where he would enrol for a diploma in Laboratory and Technology course at Mengo School of Laboratory. This was in the year 2002 to 2004.

He now applies his training to give back to the society. It was his noble work with the community in matters of health and other sensitization projects that KCDF recognized his potential and invited him for training in Leadership, conflict management and resolution.

"I lacked confidence in my childhood and it persisted even later in life. This affected me so much that talking to people was a

big problem for me," he confesses.

Even though he wouldn't talk before a group of people he was a perfectionist. This created a huge conflict within him. "There was a way I wanted things done yet I couldn't say what I wanted," he confesses.

"But after KCDF's training, I have turned my weaknesses into formidable strengths. I am no longer timid or scared of people. I view life positively. Before, I used to facilitate and leave it at that, but now I can facilitate and extend into interaction and knowing each other in a warm and more interactive way," Wakoli reveals.

KCDF training has lifted the veil that blurred his vision and now he has hit the road, searching and finding people who have veils – and duly lifting them. "I

"In his training, Wakoli uses lectures and role plays. He believes that the youth should be supported and trained on personal living. They should be in a position to control their lives."

have set goals to approach and train people on attitude change," says Wakoli. Wakoli has trained the youth Mt. Elgon -an area with recurrent conflicts -on conflict resolution.

In collaboration with Swedish Cooperative Centre, Wakoli has conducted two trainings sessions on conflict management and resolution. Also in collaboration with Kiprop Diphus, also a trainee of KCDF, he has carried out conflict-management workshop in Mt. Elgon.

"In his training, Wakoli uses lectures and role plays. He believes that the youth should be supported and trained on personal living. "They should be in a position to control their lives," he adds.

Wakoli desires to walk the talk and help others do just that. His endeavours have not been without challenges, but to Wakoli, it's those challenges that give him the fire to go on.

"My main problem is logistics and planning. I lack resources such as stationery and presentation equipment such as a projector and a computer. I have, however, learnt to improvise," Wakoli says.

Either way, he says, the gospel must be preached.

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Ubah Gure



UBAH GURE, fights female genital mutilation and illiteracy in a society where women have no voice

Ubah was born and raised within the highly secured fence of Lanet Barracks in Nakuru, Rift Valley. Her father, Yakub Gure, was a soldier and an administrator at the barracks.

"Life in the barracks was a secluded one until I joined Lanet Primary school," she remembers. Being a Somali she had to wear the hijab and this set her apart from the rest of the pupils at school.

"I used to hear from my mother that we had a home far from Nakuru and my heart always wanted to go and see my people," she recalls. She did not know that Garissa – her fatherland – was a cruel place, especially for the girl-child.

In her early childhood Ubah loved watching documentaries and computer generated-movies. "I loved documentaries about computers and animations. I was, therefore, interested in computers and how they are used to generate

such awesome programs," she says.

Upon finishing her primary education, Ubah proceeded to Lalji Nang'parshah Academy. While in high school, she would pay a visit to Garissa once or twice in a year.

"It was during my visits that I realised that a lot of youth were either drop-outs or never stepped in school. It was very painful to me," she remembers. "I wondered how these people managed to do well in business as illiterate as many of them were," she adds.

Due to lack of fees, Ubah had to stay at home so that the little money her father got could go into educating the rest of her siblings who were in high school at the time.

"I later joined Superior Commercial College in Nakuru and successfully completed a Diploma in Information Technology (IT)," she narrates. She was unable to get a job for two years after her college education.

It was during these idle times that Ubah started thinking seriously how she could be of help to the youth in Garissa. She recounts: "I felt this strong urge

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to go back home and look into why girls were getting married at twelve years of age while the boys shunned going to school."

In 2002, when her father retired, her journey back home and subsequent involvement in the gender issues would start in earnest. "I was happy to go home. I think it was time to confront what had weighed in my heart for a long time," remembers Ubah.

But Ubah soon found out that Garissa was not a place for girls to talk and give advice at will. "This was a heavily parochial society where girls were supposed to be seen and not be heard at all," she narrates.

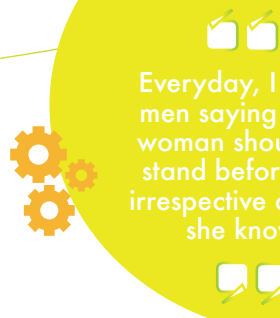
In Garissa, girls run errands while the boys are always crowded in and around makeshift shops. Here, their day is spent on either chewing or selling miraa," remembers Ubah.

"I think the problem is that their parents never went to school but are doing fine in business, so to them, business is the way to make it in life. School becomes such a long process to them, and so they simply don't want to hear of it," Ubah says.

While the boys have the free choice of going to school, girl-child education is loathed. They hold to the belief that girls would turn into prostitutes if they went to school. "That means that once the girls go through female genital mutilation (FGM) the next thing is to get married and have children," Ubah says. "I wanted to change this," she adds.

After working in a business organization for some time, Ubah felt the urge to do something about the situation. She joined North Eastern Youth group in 2006 before joining Care International the same year.

"At Care International, I finally found a platform to talk to girls and their parents about the need to go to school. We would go from village to village in



Everyday, I heard men saying that a woman should not stand before men irrespective of what she knows

the remote parts of Garissa, Udis and Daadab. The message was to show them the positive side of education," she remembers.

Ubah currently works at ASPECT-KENYA as the finance officer. It is while working here that she got an opportunity to attend a training by KCDF on Leadership and Conflict Resolution.

Talking about the training and its impact, Ubah says it was a huge boost to her character and work. "I was in so much fear. Before the training, I felt so powerless in the face of challenges in Garissa," remembers Ubah.

"Every day, I heard men saying that a woman should not stand before men irrespective of what she knows," Ubah reflects. "This affected me," she adds. The training reminded me that what people said about me should not distract me," she adds.

She now sees the positive side of criticism and considers them life challenges that must be overcome in order to see positive results.

Although she has not carried out workshops, she has engaged the youth in campaigns against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and HIV/AIDS. "We hold back-to-school campaigns. This, we do, by meeting with students and sensitizing them on the dangers of irresponsible sexual activities," she says.

Uba says that gender discrimination is her biggest obstacle. "The notion here is that women should be told," she says.

Despite the challenges,, Ubah is soildering on. "I have an agenda to fulfill," she says.





Diphus Kiprop

KIPROP's "enemies," that he was told had invaded their land, have now become his friends, thanks to KCDF training on Conflict Management and Peace Resolution.

During the build-up to 2007 Kenya general elections Kiprop was right in the heart of Eldoret town. Rumours were flying around of what could transpire whatever the outcome of the elections.

"Messages of hate and bitterness made the rounds," Kiprop remembers. The clouds of ethnic misunderstanding had become so dark and the result of the presidential elections was the only spark needed on the electrified black nimbus.

"I was in the house with my family members when I heard war songs around town. At first I thought it was just election hype. But immediately after the presidential election result was announced, there was fire everywhere," remembers Kiprop.

Kiprop intimates that when results were announced, bitterness started clouding his thinking. He remembers: "I said to myself, now that these

people have stolen our votes, why should they remain among us?"

Kiprop admits that although he never took part physically, he supported the clashes.

As the war escalated, Kiprop says that he saw his friends being shot by police. He flashes back: "The police were shooting my friends. This put a lot of bitterness. There was no need for sympathizing with anyone anymore."

In a short span of barely a month, the city that was once at peace – even if at surface level – had degenerated into a war-torn field of smoking villages. Kiprop had witnessed what would later be written in the history books as the worst post-independent Kenyan civil war.

The civil war left about 1,500 people killed and an excess of 250,000 others displaced countrywide. The aftertaste of the war and elections left Kiprop and





the larger Rift Valley residents boiling with rage and a spirit of revenge. But two years later, Kiprop has literally undergone a transforming experience through the conflict management and resolution training by KCDF.

A business management graduate of Catholic University, Kiprop now sits in the offices of Rehema Kenya- a peace resolution organisation based in Eldoret town.

“Rehema Kenya is a peace building organisation that targets the youth and helps them to live in harmony and encourages them to employ alternative ways of resolving conflicts,” Kiprop explains.

As the Assistant Program Officer, his job entails capacity building, advocacy, governance and civil engagement. He also develops training modules and workshops and public forums.

“This has been a huge step to me and I owe this eye-opening to the KCDF training,” Kiprop says. He admits that his life was full of ethnic bitterness and hate. “My perception was very bad. I didn’t listen to anyone. Whatever I said I deemed helpful but whatever other people said was rubbish,” he adds.

But what perhaps dogged his life most was stereotyping of people from one community. Looking back, it amazes what KCDF has done to his own self. What Kiprop didn’t know, he regrets, is that every person has strengths and weaknesses.

“Everyone is different, and everyone must be treated with respect. What I do right now is to go

out and tell other people that we were caught up in ethnic stereotyping and bitterness to have a change of heart and mind. I ask them to stop following politicians blindly but to be leaders of themselves,” Kiprop talks of his day to day work.

What now stands in his way is getting an unrestricted platform to do what will bring ethnic togetherness not only in Eldoret but across Kenya. This, he says, is his number one objective. “To get this platform, my aspiration is to attain the highest education level,” he says. This is not his only objective. He adds: “I want to continue educating my community to embrace justice and peace.”

He has encountered different challenges in his endeavour to train others. “I have tried my level best to give back what I was given by KCDF and train whenever I can,” he says.

So far he is happy with the training sessions that he has conducted across Eldoret and beyond. He has in total trained over 600 youth in Mt. Elgon, Eldoret, Garissa, Lugari and Moi’s Bridge.

He cites political interference as his biggest obstacle. “The biggest challenge is political interference. Most politicians treat me with suspicion whenever they hear that we’re training youth. They suspect that we will have influence on the youth during elections,” Kiprop says.

Diphus Kiprop is not about to give up. He says that this far, things are looking up and he believes that the entire country, indeed the world, shall be changed by the positive believers like him.

The biggest challenge is political interference. Most politicians treat me with suspicion whenever they hear that we’re training youth. They suspect that we will have influence on the youth during elections

Benson Osewe

The epitome of struggle and success

Benson is an accomplished young man. His sharp suit easily allows someone to mistake him for the CEO of Sagam Hospital where he works as a pharmacist.

He is a focused youth with a positive attitude and view of life.

Talking about his life, Osewe comes out as a young man whose early life attests to the true lifestyle in the Kenyan rural communities.

“As the first born I had a lot of responsibility. My mum used to sell vegetables so I was left to literally take care of our home. I fetched firewood, always got Unga (Maize flour) from the local mill and looked after my siblings,” he remembers

Osewe says that his father was never

at home in most cases. Being a broker in livestock business, he was always going from one market to the other. “I never interacted with him as much as I would have wanted,” he says.

Even when it was time to go to school Osewe remembers that his father again failed to help. He explains: “I knew that he could help me – at least give me part school fees, but he was not willing. That hurt me so much. I really wanted to go to school.”

But his heart had the fire and

his spirit refused to die. Osewe figured that failing to go to school poised danger to his dream of getting unrestricted access to the people that he wanted to reach.

Education, to him, remained the gateway to life.

Not able to get his schooling through the support of his parents, Osewe, with a vision of one day becoming a CEO, sought the help of his uncle who then took him through primary school and high school.



“My uncle gave me part of my dream, he says. Being helped by others planted the urge to give back. “People have helped me so much. My head teacher allocated me bursary and offered me emotional support throughout my high school,” he says.

The warm heart that people extended towards him positively affected him. He desired to give back, but he did not know how.

KCDF had the answer. He decided to aim higher when KCDF offered him and others a youth-tailored training on relational, communication, and relational skills.

“The training sessions and lectures organised by KCDF have given me a better picture of life and how to approach it,” Osewe says.

“Undertaking this course was God-send. It opened my eyes to how I could do what I had wanted to do – that is helping young people with no focus,” he says. Before the training, Osewe says that he had so many challenges and he had no idea how to go about them.

“My biggest problem was bringing people together. I would bring people together for a particular cause but only for a short while. Then people just left without a reason. That reason now I realize was that. KCDF training proved to me that I clearly lacked leadership skills,” Osewe reflects.

Osewe was an incoherent

person. He mostly had good thoughts but unfortunately he failed to communicate the same to the group members. Things have since changed – for the better. Osewe now heads one of the biggest youth networks in Nyanza Province of Kenya.

WEKENI (Western Kenya Youth for Change) is an umbrella body of ten youth groups that operate in different parts of Gem District. “I can say that this has been fruitful because of KCDF training,” he explains.

“KCDF trained me not only to communicate my thoughts to the people I lead, but they also equipped me with communication skills. The training insisted on respect for others’ opinion. Putting the same into practice has transformed my leadership,” Osewe says.

The response after putting into practice what he learned has been rewarding. It (the training) has seen him put WEKENI back to its feet.

And to make sure that the skills he got benefits others, Osewe has organized dozens of training sessions.

“I decided to train ten leaders who will then transfer the knowledge to other young people,” Osewe says. These youth that he trained have gone ahead and formed other smaller groups.

The groups that have been formed are: Kalago Youth Group,

Bro-shop group, Shiners Group, Sagam Peer Educators, Tuungane, Jiamue Ndani Theatre Group, Olimbi Youth Group Aids, Yau Pachi Group, and Kobat Youth Group.

Osewe disseminates information by way of open question/answer, and role plays. “I also use the training manual given by KCDF. The manual goes around the groups on a rotational manner,” Osewe says

Apart from offering support to youth and trainings on issues affecting them such as HIV/AIDS, WEKENI group, through the help of Compassion International, has set up a poultry farm. So the group has about a hundred grown layers and over 50 chicks. They also give counselling support to an orphanage in the local church.

Looking back, Osewe now finds himself closer to his goals and objectives. “I still want to become a CEO, possibly, the head of Sagam Hospital where I currently work. I also want to bring together my community,” he says.

The work that Osewe does on a day to day basis goes with a lot of challenges. He says that he finds it difficult to get time as he is in the hospital most of the time.

“A lot of youths want me to train them, but I am mostly in the hospital,” he says. Either way, Osewe says, the good work must continue.

OKON ABDI

Okon legs were paralyzed by polio when she was four years old. Her mother died soon after leaving her under the care of her blind father. But instead of giving up, she soldiered on

Okon was born a bouncing baby girl in the sweltering heat of Garissa in December 1981. Life seemed normal until at the age of three when she was struck by polio. Although she was cured, the deadly disease left her unable to walk on two legs.

Today, she can only either crawl on her four limbs or move about in a wheel chair. The disease not only left a huge dent on her physique but also left her emotionally shaken.

"When I was struck by polio, I remained in bed for four years. I couldn't go to school or do anything," she says. Later, when she decided to join school, her siblings discouraged her from doing so.

"I think they never wanted me to join school because I was going to be a bother to them because they

had to carry me to and from school. This was an embarrassment to them," she painfully says. Determined to beat the odds, Okon insisted on going to school. In January 1989, she was finally carried to school by her mother. Life in school, she says, was rough and tough. "I was looked down upon by the other pupils. I remember them jumping over me while I crawled," she remembers.

This, she remembers, did not dampen her spirit. She was bright and this gave her the morale to carry on undeterred. "I was always number one. I beat everyone from class one to eight. So to me, disability was not inability," she says.

Even when her mum passed away when she was in class four, leaving her with her blind father, Okon kept going. "My mum used to take care of me single-handedly. She would take me to school and come for me in the evening. I didn't know what to do when she died, but I was determined to study and excel," she says.

Her older sisters dropped out and got

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married, but she held on. Having passed class eight exams at Garissa Primary School, Okon joined Umasalama Girls. “My father was blind and sick and was not able to pay my school fees,” she remembers.

This forced her to seek the help of her head teacher, who agreed to enlist her for bursary funding. Later, she applied for scholarship from an organization called Mikono International. She recounts: “They accepted my application and sponsored my entire secondary education.”

After sitting for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams, which she passed well, Okon stayed home for one year before joining Garissa Technical Training College.

“At Garissa Technical, I took a Diploma in accounting and later pursued a certificate in a secretarial course,” she recounts. Although Okon kept her head high, life was challenging.

“In our society, people think that the disabled have nothing to offer and so they ignore us,” She says. Without employment in Garissa town, she had to do all sorts of menial jobs to survive. “Garissa has a lot of illiterate people, so I helped people to fill forms, or write letters at a small fee,” she says. It was during this time that Care International offered her a contract

that has been running for three years. It was while working here that she was told by a friend about KCDF training on leadership and conflict resolution. Okon says: “At first I thought it would be cumbersome for me to travel to Nairobi but I decided to attend the training.” She today remembers the training with nostalgia: “The training helped me rethink my purpose and goals. I remember telling Bev (one of the facilitators) that I cannot teach others. But she encouraged me and taught me communication skills.”

Being a bright girl in school, she did not respect others’ opinions. Today her perception of people has changed. She explains: “I respect people’s opinions and I know that everyone’s idea counts. Life has become easier and my everyday meetings are more fruitful.”

“I give lectures or speeches on many disability initiatives. The skills acquired from KCDF’s training have come in handy,” she says. “I can gauge the crowd and resolve conflicts that arise as a result of misgivings and contentions,” she adds.

“KCDF mentored me and that helped me grow. I have also endeared myself to that spirit of mentorship. I have mentees that I share with and encourage. I always tell them that what one has done another can do – even better,” she says.

Okon is a testimony to the disabled in Garissa. She has taught more than 20 youth in Garissa on leadership skills; 30 chairpersons of various youth groups on waste management and other lectures where she is invited on day to day occasions.

Although her missions and goals are on course, she has challenges that range from mobility problems to financial constraints. “Moving from place to place is a huge challenge for me,” she says.

Okon, the last born in a family of six, today carries the family’s torch. “I am the only one working in my family and everyone looks up to me,” she says.

No one can believe that the same disabled person they thought would embarrass them is the one now inspiring the family,” she says confidently.





Linda Chebet

Linda Chebet, is a product of single parenthood, she talks of her struggles and ultimate freedom after KCDF's training

Chebet was born prematurely. Immediately after she was born, her mother became so sick that she had to be hospitalised. When baby Chebet matured in the incubator, her mum remained immobile in a ward just a few meters from her.

Her father abandoned both of them while they were still in hospital. Chebet's mother, a house wife, therefore had to later single-handedly take care of the family.

"My birth had such a misfortune, but I didn't understand why dad had to leave us when we needed him most. I was so bitter about it," she says.

As a result of this abandonment, Chebet grew up in bitterness. It was a difficult time for the family, but now as she looks back, she agrees that nothing is too hard for a person who decides to look at every

misfortune as a challenge that can be overcome.

"Mum and I got better. The problem was how to make ends meet but here we are," she says.

Single parenthood created a level of emotional imbalance in her. "I did not know who I was or what I wanted to do in life. It was all hazy, a lost identity sort of," she reveals.

Born in Eldoret, Chebet's family later relocated to Kitengela, Nairobi. In Nairobi, Chebet attended Utawala academy in Nairobi's Embakasi area before joining Turbo Girls High School for her Secondary education.

After high school, Chebet pursued a public relations course. "My mother worked hard and enrolled me at Air Travel and Related Studies for my Diploma in Public relations," she recounts.

When she graduated from college and started brushing shoulders with the outside world, she found out that the bitterness that she had harboured was taking a toll on her life. Life became so complicated.

KCDF invited her for a leadership and Conflict Management training. "The facilitators advised me that it was time let go of the bitterness. They told me there was very little I could do about it but accept," she says.

The trainers congratulated her for what she had done with her life such as going to school and acquiring skills. "They told me that I had made a huge step," she says.

Forgiveness, she was told, was the only way to go. "I forgave everyone who had wronged me. This released the bitterness from my heart," she explains.

She adds: "the bitterness had clouded my mind. I had no confidence, but now I can express myself well and address people. She now knows what she wants in life.

Coming from Eldoret, the hotspot of post-election violence, Chebet has been of help to people who are in conflict. She now works as the communication officer with Youth Consortium Kenya. The non-governmental organization has a membership of 62 active youth groups. They implement various activities such as conducting civic education, environmental management, income generating activities,

and sports. The organisation covers eight districts namely Uasin Gishu, Marakwet, Keiyo, Transzoia, Baringo, Nandi, West-Pokot, and Kericho.

Dunke Badi, the financial director of Youth Consortium testified that Chebet has transformed herself into a wonderful leader. "Chebet works without supervision and responds to incoming communication with admirable professionalism," he says.

"We have hundreds of youth that we deal with, and Chebet, I think is one of our best. Her attitude towards people is excellent. She is a leader per excellence," Dunke says.

Chebet is now focused in school. "I want to undertake a degree course and continue supporting reconciliation efforts in Kenya," says Chebet.

She also wants to bring developmental activities in the community.

She has trained 22 youth in Kericho, 25 in Eldoret. "I used theatre, sport, and class sport to teach them," she says.

Chebet says that getting people to train is one of her biggest challenges. Also, at times, schools and institutions are reluctant to give permission for student training.

"Today I have a life that I am proud of, and the future is bright," says Chebet.



Chebet works without supervision and responds to incoming communication with admirable professionalism



CONCLUSION

Over 60,000 youth have benefitted from the Youth Development Programme since its inception in September 2006. All the beneficiaries are, in one way or another, participating in improving their communities and creating opportunities for themselves and their peers.

It is encouraging that the beneficiaries of this programme are taking action and sharing the knowledge that they have acquired over the years with their fellow young people. The collective efforts and energy of these young people prove that investing in youth goes a long way in promoting nation building.

KCDF is convinced that these young people will continue to show leadership and promote cohesion in their communities. We hope that various organisations will continue supporting the wonderful work that these youth are doing.





About KCDF

KCDF is a Kenyan philanthropic foundation that provides grants and technical support for sustainable community-driven development initiatives. Formed in 1997, the foundation was established to drive Kenyan communities toward self progress by exploiting locally available resources and creating homegrown solutions to local challenges.

Our Vision

All Kenyan communities giving and working together in a prosperous nation.

Our Mission

KCDF promotes sustainable development of communities through social investment, resource mobilisation, endowment building and grant making.

Our Beliefs

As a Foundation and in tackling the questions of poverty eradication and development, we believe that:

- Every human being has the potential to make a positive difference in their own lives and that of others around them.
- People's participation, ownership and control are vital to equitable and sustainable development
- Every community has assets to use towards its own well being as well as for national development
- Meaningful development focuses on people, brings freed, space, creativity and transformation
- The poor are capable of achieving long- lasting improvements in their lives
- Civil society has potential to influence social, economic and political change





Our Values

- **Respect for the rights and dignity of every human being:** We attach great value to the dignity and rights of every human being regardless of ethnicity/race, religion, gender, age, physical or mental disposition
- **Equity:** We strive to promote and address equity in all our endeavours in pursuing the goals and objectives of the Foundation
- **Honesty and Transparency:** We value and promote transparency, honesty and efficiency in our dealings with others irrespective of the social standing
- **Commitment to social justice philanthropy:** We are committed to philanthropy that promotes social justice, integrity, and respect for others in order to uphold the public trust and secure the rights of poor people.
- **Working with others:** We value and are committed to quality and broad participation with other likeminded individuals or organisations
- **Learning and innovation:** We value reflection, learning and innovation and strive to evolve, promote and share best practices with others.



1 leader.
7 values.
infinite possibilities.



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